

# The Country of God

## Part VIII



by A. A. A. Hartvisen

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## The Country of God

### Part VIII

Balaam was sitting on a pine butt by the woodpile when Misael returned. It was the same stump that Malasar had sat before. *So long ago.*

Balaam watched Misael carefully as he came up. The boy stopped before his father. Balaam searched the boy's eyes carefully for a moment, then, finding what he sought, leapt up.

"Misael!" he shouted, enfolding his son in a crushing embrace.

He relaxed his grip on the boy, but did not break contact. He kept squeezing Misael's shoulders, as though to reassure himself that the boy was real.

"You've come back to me," he said, his voice broken with feeling.

“Yes, Father,” said Misael.

“I knew you would, somehow,” said Father in a low voice. “Still I doubted. But you rejected the ecclesis!” he shouted, shaking Misael back and forth.

*He knows?* Misael thought. Father saw the question in his son’s eyes.

“Yes, I knew. I always knew, Misael. He came for me, many years ago, as well. I saw the signs when he came for you.”

“And you rejected him also?”

“Yes, of course,” said Father.

“But you knew!” Misael accused. “Why did you not help me to understand?”

“But I did, Misael! I did as much as I could. I could not make your choice for you! The offer was not a trick. It was true. But only very few see where the real value, the real *humanity*, lies. If I had tried to force you, he would have turned it against me, guaranteeing that you chose his plan.

“We are free, Misael, and we are slaves. We are weak and we are too powerful. We are men, but made in God’s image. And only in our Father’s love can we find the Answer to our pain. All else is vanity.”

Misael hugged his Father once more, and the two went back to the house. The boy thought of what his father’s lot would have been if he had chosen the great spirit’s plan. All the good Misael would have done for strangers would have cost a father his son’s love. Misael no longer felt so wise, so sure of himself. He had been humbled by this ordeal, but it was that humility which now allowed the spirit of God back into his

soul.

Misael set about living his life the best that he could for the way God made him. He grew in wisdom and charity over the years, and tried to learn to know God. Through hardship, he grew in charity. But he never again spoke the name of Iabheleu, and he was never able to overcome his unreasoning fear of the Holy Scriptures.

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VANITAS·VANITATVM·ET·OMNIA·VANITAS

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